

WASHINGTON (April 27) – Congressman Spencer Bachus (AL-6) recognized National Autism Awareness Month with remarks on the floor of the House today.

Bachus was a lead sponsor of a resolution designating April as a month to promote autism awareness. The House approved the resolution unanimously.

Congressman Bachus' remarks follow. To view his floor speech , [click here](#).

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As a parent myself, I know that there is nothing more important than the well-being of a child.□ When there is a change in a child's behavior, the parents are the first to notice and the first to want answers.□□

Autism has always been a challenging diagnosis.□ There is an increasing incidence of autism spectrum disorder, and it is something that children and families will have to deal with their entire lives.□

There are two very important things that we now know.□ The first is that awareness is critical, which is what makes the designation of April as National Autism Awareness Month so significant.□ The sooner that an autism spectrum disorder is identified, the sooner a child can receive specialized treatment.□

The second thing we know is that early intervention programs can make an exceptional difference in the quality of life for these precious children.□ This has been proven not just by studies, but by the personal stories told by individual families.□ They have seen their young children literally blossom in front of their eyes as a result of early treatment.□

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The Birmingham area, where I'm from, has an innovative center called Mitchell's Place. It is a model for autism services not just in Alabama, but I believe the entire country. Mitchell's Place combines the latest in behavioral and developmental research on autism with a structured and caring environment. When you walk through the doors into the center, which is bright and nurturing, you can feel the love for the children and they respond.

There are many promising developments to report to families living with autism. Recently, Congressman Mike Doyle, Chairman of the Congressional Autism Caucus, and I hosted a briefing where we heard from the Director of the National Institutes of Mental Health, Dr. Thomas Insel. Dr. Insel told us about exciting research progressing in a number of areas. Expert researchers are studying causes, early intervention programs, strategies for older individuals with autism, and even potential cures. In my state, thanks to the efforts of State Representative Cam Ward, we now have an Alabama Autism Task Force which is coordinating our state resources.

In conclusion, it is an honor to speak on behalf of this resolution. It is also a pleasure to work with the many members of Congress who care about this issue, including my fellow lead sponsors Congressman Dave Reichert and Congressman Jim Gerlach. Today's resolution has great meaning to the millions of families across America affected by autism spectrum disorder. And if it encourages parents to be more attentive to the symptoms of autism and to get early treatment for their children, we will have done a great service for our families.